

**Council Reaches Out to Remind Citizens
That Email Communications with the Council
Might be Classified as Public Record**

News Release

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Contact:

Ronald J. Pursell
Council Chief of Staff
Ph: (504) 658-1082
rjpursell@cityofno.com

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New Orleans, LA - June 3, 2009 - This week, at a City Council Budget Committee meeting, Council President Arnie Fielkow asked that citizens be reminded that some email communications with Councilmembers could be classified as public records and might be subject to release to the public at large by media outlets.

"Our citizens should be aware that some information communicated about neighborhood issues, reports of crime activity, and requests for City services, as well as opinions on Council legislation, City zoning and related topics might be classified as a public record and possibly released to the public. We certainly do not want to discourage citizen electronic communication with us - but only want the public to be aware that our communications on these issues might not be protected," said Fielkow.

In response to recent public records requests, on May 22, 2009, the New Orleans City Council began the process to make available to the public its emails produced over the last three years. Over the next several weeks, the City Council, its staff and a staff assembled by the Council's Special Counsel will continue the task of reviewing more than two-million pages that total over 400,000 emails. A team of lawyers, paralegals, technology and communications professionals, Councilmembers and staff are working to ensure that postings are made as quickly as possible.

The City Council has never had an issue with non-privileged or non-private constituent information being made public. The Council is reviewing the emails in order to protect private information of constituents and attorney client privileged information. The Council will continue to go through the time consuming and costly process of reviewing every email and making public as many emails as possible, as quickly as possible.

The Council's Special Legal Counsel, Steven J. Lane said, "It is an overwhelming task that is costing thousands of dollars. Nonetheless, the Council is making its best effort to comply with Public Records Requests to produce over 400,000 emails."

All Councilmember emails are currently in the review process. Email postings will be made on a rolling basis and will be updated periodically on the City Council's website.

To view Council Email Communication Information and Resources click [here](#).

New Orleans City Council

The New Orleans City Council is the legislative branch of New Orleans City government. The Council considers and enacts all local laws that govern the City of New Orleans. The Council also approves the operating and capital budgets for the City, as recommended by the mayor, and continually monitors revenues and expenditures for local government operations. The City Council is also the regulatory body for public utilities. It also reviews and has final say on many land use and zoning matters, as well as considers major economic development projects for the City. As a Board of Review for Orleans Parish, the Council examines appeals of property tax assessments for real estate taxes, and certifies tax rolls to the Louisiana Tax Commission. Other responsibilities of the Council include overseeing the operation of the public access television in Orleans Parish.

The City Council is comprised of five districts and two councilmembers-at-large. Council President and Councilmember-at-Large Arnie Fielkow; Council Vice President and Councilmember-at-Large Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson; District "A" Councilmember Shelley Midura; District "B" Councilmember Stacy S. Head; District "C" Councilmember James Carter; District "D" Councilmember Cynthia Hedge-Morrell; and District "E" Councilmember Cynthia Willard-Lewis.